



祖
寺

February 17, 2020

Dear Sangha,

During the intense sitting of sesshin this past winter Roshi asked me to lead this year's Ango period as Shusho. As I humbly and hesitantly accepted this huge undertaking, I felt many emotions come across my mind. As I continued to sit, the biggest emotion that came to me, no doubt, was fear and do I have the courage to lead our sangha in practice. This idea of courage and what it means to being courageous kept coming back to me for the rest of sesshin.

Taking this to mind, I chose the theme for this upcoming Ango period as "courage in action". Some people define courage as facing your fears and standing up for what is right, being brave. Which some may find true but I found a different meaning. "Courage" which comes from the Latin root for heart means to "speak one's mind by telling all one's heart" and also called "ordinary courage." The text I chose for this Ango period is from Pema Chodron book, *When Things Fall Apart, Heart Advice for Difficult Times*. Specifically, Chapter One entitled, "Intimacy with Fear".

This year's Ango period begins on March 8 and concludes on May 31 and I humbly ask for your commitment and support in deepening our practice together. As Ango approaches I encourage everyone to contemplate on how we can be courageous in everyday actions and what it means to speak and act fully from the heart. Let us become intimate with our fears together.

Nine Deep Bows,

Mark Shigen Peterson